



consumer news

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
Office of Consumer Affairs
Virginia H. Knauer, Director

Vol. 4, No. 4, May 15, 1974

Dear Consumer:

This summer, your key to cooling efficiency is 3 capital letters. EER stands for Energy Efficiency Ratio, & you will soon see EER on labels attached to room air conditioners.

Under a voluntary program, **Commerce Dept.** will allow manufacturers to use special EER tags for room air conditioners. You can be sure that a unit with this tag has been tested & certified by the manufacturer for cooling capacity & electrical power requirements.

EER is expressed as a single number. The higher the EER, the more efficient the air conditioner—and the better buy it is, too. EER is obtained by using 2 figures: the unit's cooling capacity (measured in Btu's per hour) & the electrical power required to run the unit (measured in watts). To get the EER, simply divide Btu's by watts. When you buy a model with a high EER, you get more cooling capacity for your money; & since the model requires less power, you will spend less to run it. You save energy & money, too.



This year you will also see EERs on many manufacturers' own labels & hang tags. However, if there is no EER tag at all, figure out the EER by dividing Btu's by watts.

For more information, write to **Consumer Information**, Pueblo, CO 81009; ask for *Energy Efficiency in Room Air Conditioners*.

Sincerely,

Virginia Knauer

How to read Commerce Dept. efficiency tag

<p>ASDF Corp. Model 5508A10 8,000 Btu per hour (cooling capacity) 860 watts 115 volts 7.5 amperes Data on this label for this unit certified by </p>	<p>energy guide</p> <p>EER=9.3 Energy Efficiency Ratio expressed in Btu per watt-hour</p> <p>For available 7,500 to 8,500 Btu per hour 115 volt window models the EER range is</p> <p>EER 5.4 to EER 9.9</p> <p>For information on cost of operation and selection of correct cooling capacity, ask your dealer for NBS Publication LC 1053 or write to National Bureau of Standards, 411.00, Washington, D.C. 20234</p>	<p>IMPORTANT... for units with the same cooling capacity, higher EER means: Lower energy consumption Lower cost to use!</p> <p>Tested in accordance with</p> 
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EER for this imaginary model is 9.3 (largest figure). This model has cooling capacity of 8,000 Btu's per hour (upper left). Since room air conditioners are classified by their Btu range, this model can be compared with other 115-volt models that offer 7,500 to 8,500 Btu's per hour (2 lines below EER). EERs for all 115-volt models in this class range from 5.4 to 9.9 (figures in box); thus, this model has high efficiency rating. The range for each class is different. (For operating costs of room air conditioners, see back page of this issue.)

Consumer News Index: Volume 3, part 2: Oct. 1, 1973—March 15, 1974

Below is an index to CONSUMER NEWS & its supplement CONSUMER REGISTER for the issues published October 1973 through March 1974. Date & page of the newsletter are given after each subject. "Deceptive practices Nov 1:2" means an item about deceptive practices appeared on page 2 of Nov. 1 issue of CONSUMER NEWS. Subjects that appeared in the CONSUMER REGISTER supplement are designated by "CR" before the date & page number. "CR Feb 15:1" means page 1 of Feb. 15 issue of CONSUMER REGISTER.

A, B

Additives CR Dec 15:2
Administration on Aging CR Nov 15:1, 2
Advertising Nov 1:2 CR Oct 1:1
Agriculture Dept
Agreement on responsibility CR Dec 1:1
Agriculture Extension Service Nov 1:2
Agriculture Marketing Service Nov 1:2
Beef sausage CR Nov 15:1
Canned grapefruit CR Dec 15:1
Fat content CR Nov 15:1
Firewood Dec 15:3
Frozen apple juice CR Feb 15:1,2
Frozen asparagus CR Oct 1:2
Frozen carrots CR Oct 1:1,2 CR Feb 1:1,2
Lids CR Oct 15:1
Meat Identification Program Oct 15:4
Meat & poultry quality CR Mar 15:1
Meat & poultry transportation CR Oct 15:2
Mushrooms Dec 15:3
Nutrition labeling CR Mar 15:1
Pet birds Mar 15:3
Pitted red cherries CR Oct 15:1
Pork CR Jan 1:1
Quality control CR Mar 15:1
Sealed cans CR Feb 1:1
Swine blood CR Feb 15:1
Trichinae CR Jan 1:1
Air bags CR Feb 15:1
Air conditioner efficiency Oct 1:2 CR Feb 15:2 CR Dec 15:1
Airlanes CR Nov 1:2
Allergies Oct 15:3 CR Feb 1:1 CR Nov 1:1
Amtrak Dec 1:1
Animal & Plant Inspection Service Feb 15:1 CR Oct 15:2
Animal Welfare Act Feb 15:1
Antacid drugs CR Dec 1:2
Antipollution programs Feb 15:4
Appliance ratings CR Dec 15:1
Apricot kernels Jan 1:4
Arbitration Dec 15:2
Artists' paints CR Jan 1:1 CR Nov 15:1
Asbestos CR Nov 15:1
Aspirin Oct 15:3
Asthma remedies Feb 15:3
Automatic transmission Oct 1:2
Back-to-school safety Oct 1:1
Baggage liability CR Nov 1:2
Banned Product List (pub) Nov 1:1
Battery charger Mar 1:4
Beef sausage CR Nov 15:1
Better Business Bureau Dec 15:2
Bicycles Oct 15:2 Oct 1:1
Birth control clinics CR Nov 1:1
Bottled water CR Jan 15:2
Botulism Oct 1:1 Dec 15:3 Feb 1:4
Brake hoses CR Jan 1:2
"Buffet bacteria" Nov 15:4
Bus CR Nov 1:2

C

Cancer
Asbestos CR Nov 15:1
Injectable contraceptive CR Nov 1:1,2
Canned fruits CR Dec 15:1,2
Carbon monoxide Jan 15:2
Car deaths Feb 15:4
Care labels Mar 15:2
Carpets Mar 15:3
Car pool Nov 15:1 Jan 15:4
Caustic compounds Oct 15:2
Cemetery Nov 1:3
Census Bureau CR Nov 15:2
Cheese products CR Oct 15:1
Chemistry sets Nov 1:4
Cherries CR Oct 15:4
Child car seats Feb 1:3 Feb 15:3 Mar 1:4
Child seat belt harnesses Jan 1:4
Chinese food Nov 1:2
Chocolate candy Feb 15:3
Christmas lights Dec 1:1
Class actions Dec 15:2
Clothes dryers Mar 15:3
Clothing Oct 15:2
Colds Oct 15:3 CR Feb 1:1
Color TV Jan 1:1 Feb 1:1
Commerce Dept
Appliance ratings CR Dec 15:1
Energy efficiency Feb 1:1 CR Dec 15:1 CR Feb 15:2
Consumer Action Panels
AutoCAP Dec 1:3
CRICAP Dec 1:3
FICAP Dec 1:3
MACAP Dec 1:3
Consumer Advisory Council CR Jan 15:1
Consumer complaints CR Nov 1:1
Consumer Federation of America CR Nov 1:1
Consumer information CR Nov 1:1
Consumer justice Dec 15:2
CONSUMER NEWS
Subscription price Nov 1:1
Consumer Product Safety Commission
See product safety
Consumers Union
Child car seats Feb 1:3
Drained weight CR Jan 15:2
Microwave ovens CR Oct 1:2
Contamination CR Oct 15:1 CR Feb 1:1
Contraceptives CR Oct 15:1 CR Oct 15:1 CR Nov 1:1,2
Conversion chart Feb 1:2
Correspondence schools Oct 1:4
Cosmetic complaints CR Nov 1:1
Cosmetics
Color additive CR Dec 15:2
Dictionary Nov 15:2
Food & Drug Administration Nov 15:2
Ingredient labeling Nov 15:2 CR Nov 1:1
Knauer, Virginia Nov 15:2
Office of Consumer Affairs Nov 15:2
Red No. 2 Nov 15:2
Cost of Living Council Jan 15:3
Feb 1:2 CR Feb 15:2
Coughs Oct 15:3 Feb 15:4 CR Feb 1:1
Cream CR Oct 15:1

Cribs Oct 15:2 CR Jan 1:1 CR Feb 1:1
Customs Bureau CR Mar 1:1
Cyclamates CR Mar 1:2

D, E

"Danmark" CR Mar 1:1
Deceptive practices Nov 1:2
Defective products CR Mar 15:2
Defects report Mar 1:2,3
Defense Dept
Off-road vehicles CR Dec 15:1
Depo Provero CR Nov 1:1,2
Detergents CR Mar 1:1, 2
Diabetes Oct 15:3
Dihydroxyacetone
See additives
Diethylstilbestrol (DES) CR Oct 15:1
Drained weight CR Dec 15:2 CR Jan 15:2
Education Oct 1:4
Electric mixers CR Oct 1:2
Electrical systems Oct 1:1
Electrically operated toys Nov 1:4
Emulsifiers CR Oct 15:1
Energy
Aircraft Nov 15:1
Atomic Energy Commission Nov 15:1
Car pool Nov 15:1
Children's letters Jan 15:1
Daylight Savings Time Nov 15:1
Electric blankets Jan 15:1
Emergency Energy Act Nov 15:1
Federal Energy Office Feb 1:1
Feb 15:1 CR Jan 1:1 CR Jan 15:1
Health Report Jan 15:3
Highway speed Nov 15:1
Jet fuel Nov 15:1
Lights Nov 15:1 Dec 1:1
Mass transit Nov 15:1
Nuclear plants Nov 15:1
Octane ratings Feb 1:1
Oil Nov 15:1
President Nixon Dec 1:1
Priority list Oct 15:1
Project Independence Feb 1:1
Snoopy Oct 15:1
Solar energy Feb 15:4
Thermostats Nov 15:1
Tips Nov 15:1 Dec 1:1 Dec 15:1 Jan 1:1 Jan 15:1 Feb 15:1 Mar 15:4
Also see gasoline
Energy efficiency labels Feb 1:1 CR Dec 15:1 CR Feb 15:2
Engine knock Feb 1:2
Enriched flour & bread CR Nov 15:2 CR Nov 15:2 CR Mar 1:2
Environmental Protection Agency
Antipollution programs Feb 15:4
Appliance ratings CR Dec 15:1
Gas mileage Oct 1:2 Dec 1:1
Insect killer Feb 1:4
Pesticides CR Feb 1:2
President's energy message Feb 1:1
Rodent killer Feb 15:3
Enzymes CR Oct 15:1
Estrogen CR Oct 15:1
Executive Office of the President CR Jan 1:1

F

Fats CR Nov 15:1
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation CR Feb 1:1
Federal Energy Office Feb 1:1 Feb 15:1 CR Jan 1:1 CR Jan 15:1
Federal Hazardous Substances Act CR Nov 15:1
Federal Highway Administration Jan 15:4
Federal Home Loan Bank Board CR Dec 15:2 CR Feb 1:1
Federal Reserve System CR Feb 1:1
Federal Savings & Loan System CR Dec 15:2
Federal Trade Commission
Care labels Mar 15:2
Cough remedies Feb 15:4
Detergents CR Mar 1:1, 2
Funeral homes Nov 1:2 Mar 15:1
Funerals Nov 1:3
Nylon CR Feb 15:1
Vocational schools Oct 1:4
Yard goods Mar 15:2
Fire protection CR Oct 1:1
Fish CR Jan 15:1, 2 CR Feb 1:2
Fishy names CR Jan 15:1, 2 CR Feb 1:2
Flame retardant Nov 1:4
Flammability CR Jan 15:1
Flammable materials Oct 1:1
Flood insurance CR Oct 1:1
Fabric flammability CR Jan 1:2
Fireplaces Feb 15:2
Flu Oct 15:3
Food & Drug Administration
Agreement on responsibilities CR Dec 1:1
Antacid drugs CR Dec 1:2
Apricot kernels Jan 1:4
Asbestos CR Nov 15:1
Asthma remedies Feb 15:3
Bottled water CR Jan 15:2
Botulinum toxin Dec 15:3
Canned fruits CR Dec 15:1
Canned grapefruit CR Dec 15:1
Chocolate candy Feb 15:3
Cold medications Oct 15:3
Cosmetics CR Nov 1:1 CR Dec 15:2
Coughs CR Mar 1:2
Cyclamates CR Mar 1:2
Drained weight CR Dec 15:1 CR Jan 15:2
Enriched flour & bread CR Nov 15:2 CR Mar 1:2
Enzymes CR Oct 15:1
Flavorings CR Dec 1:1
Food labeling CR Jan 1:2
Fruit nectar CR Dec 15:1, 2
Health food stores Jan 1:4
Hemochromatosis CR Nov 15:2
Inhaler Feb 15:3
Injectable contraceptive CR Nov 1:1
Inspection exemption CR Oct 15:2
Iron CR Nov 15:2 CR Mar 1:2
Laser products CR Feb 1:2
Margarine CR Dec 1:1, 2
Meat inspection Feb 15:4
Methajade Liquid CR Mar 1:2
Microwave ovens CR Oct 1:2
Milk & cream CR Dec 1:1
"Morning After" pill CR Oct 15:1
Mushrooms Oct 1:1 Dec 15:3 Feb 1:4 Feb 15:3
Nutrition labeling CR Dec 1:1
Nutritive sweeteners CR Dec 1:1
Over-the-counter drugs CR Dec 1:2
Oysters, clams & mussels CR Feb 1:1

Poison control program Jan 15:4
 Public comment CR Dec 1:2
 Purple ink Feb 15:4
 Vitamin A labeling CR Dec 1:1
 White House Conference CR Dec 1:1
 X-ray machines CR Nov 1:2
 Yogurt CR Dec 1:1
 Food labeling CR Jan 1:2
 Food poisoning Nov 15:4
 Food stamps CR Jan 1:1
 Frozen apple juice CR Feb 15:1, 2
 Frozen asparagus CR Oct 1:2
 Frozen carrots CR Oct 1:1, 2
 Fruit juices CR Oct 15:3
 Fruit nectar CR Dec 15:1
 Fuel bills Oct 15:1
 Funeral homes Nov 1:2 Mar 15:1
 Funerals Nov 1:3
 Fungicide Nov 1:2
 Furnaces Oct 15:2
 Furniture Oct 15:2 Nov 1:3

G, H, I, J, K

Gardening Nov 1:2
 Gas mileage for '74 cars Oct 1:2
 Gasoline Dec 1:1 Dec 15:4 Jan 1:1
 Feb 1:2 Jan 15:3, 4 Mar 15:2
 Glass Oct 15:2
Government Printing Office Nov 1:1
 Hazard list Oct 15:2
Health, Education & Welfare Dept
 Health Report Jan 15:3
 Intermediate care facilities CR Feb 1:2
 Lead poisoning Jan 15:4
 Medicaid CR Feb 1:2
 Medicare CR Feb 1:2
 Nursing homes CR Feb 1:2
 Nutrition for elderly CR Oct 1:2
 Older Americans CR Nov 15:1, 2
 "Skilled" nursing homes CR Feb 1:2
 Health food store Nov 1:2 Jan 1:4
 Heart disease Oct 15:3
 Heat Nov 15:1
 Hepatitis Feb 15:4
 Hijackers CR Nov 1:2
 High speed performance CR Oct 15:2
 Holiday mailing Nov 15:3
 Holiday travel Dec 1:1
 Home study schools Oct 1:4
Housing & Urban Development Dept
 Interstate Land Sales CR Oct 1:1
 Publication Oct 15:3
 Humane care Feb 15:1
 Hygienic materials Nov 1:4
 Inconvenience claim Dec 15:3
 Inhaler Feb 15:3
 Injury Oct 1:1 CR Nov 1:2
 Insect killer Feb 1:4
 Inspection
 Exemption CR Oct 15:2
 Foods CR Dec 1:1
 Instant glue Jan 15:3
 Insulation Oct 15:1
 Insurance CR Feb 15:2
 Insurance policies Jan 15:4
 Interest CR Feb 1:1
Interior Dept
 Off-road vehicles CR Dec 15:1
 Intermediate care facilities CR Feb 1:2
Internal Revenue Service Jan 15:3
 Interstate Land Sales CR Oct 1:1
 Iron CR Nov 15:2 CR Mar 1:2
 "Jerry cans" Mar 15:2
Justice Dept Jan 15:3

Keys Oct 15:2
 Knauer, Virginia
 Cosmetics Nov 15:2
 Energy tips Dec 15:1 Jan 1:1
 Jan 15:1
 Priority list for energy Oct 15:1
 Snoopy Oct 15:1
Know Your Pension Plan Dec 15:4

L, M, N

Labeling
 Cosmetics CR Nov 1:1
 Margarine CR Dec 1:1, 2
 Mattresses CR Jan 15:1
 Yogurt CR Dec 1:1
Labels Oct 15:4 Nov 1:4 CR Oct 1:2
 Lamps Mar 1:4
 Land developers CR Oct 1:1
 Laser products CR Feb 1:2
 Lawnmowers Oct 15:2
 Lead
 See paints
 Lids CR Oct 15:1
 Lights Jan 1:4
 Lung disease Oct 15:3
 Margarine CR Dec 1:1, 2
 Massachusetts CR Feb 1:1
 Mattresses Nov 1:3 CR Jan 15:1
 Mattress flammability CR Jan 15:1
 Meat Identification Program Oct 15:4
 Meat byproducts CR Oct 15:2
 Meat inspection Feb 15:4
Meat & poultry
 Lids CR Oct 15:1
 Nutrition labeling CR Mar 15:1
 Quality CR Mar 15:1
 Sanitary transportation CR Oct 15:2
 Medicaid CR Feb 1:2
 Medicare CR Feb 1:2
 Mexico CR Jan 15:1
 Microwave ovens CR Oct 1:2
 Miles per gallon Oct 1:2, 3 Dec 1:2
 Feb 1:1
 Misleading practices Oct 1:4
 "Morning After" pill CR Oct 15:1
 Mortgage regulations CR Dec 15:2
 Motorcycle helmets CR Mar 1:2
 Motorcycles & 3-wheeled vehicles CR Mar 1:1
 Movers Nov 1:3 Dec 15:3
 Mushrooms Oct 1:1 Dec 15:3 Feb 1:4 Feb 15:3
 Nails Oct 15:2
 Nasal decongestants Oct 15:3
National Bureau of Standards
 Energy efficiency ratings CR Dec 15:1
 Price per half gallon Mar 15:2
 Storing gas Mar 15:2
National Business Council for Consumer Affairs Oct 1:4 Dec 15:2
National Forest Service Dec 15:3
National Forest System CR Dec 15:1
National Institute for Consumer Justice Dec 15:2
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration Nov 15:4 CR Jan 15:1 CR Feb 1:2
 New Hampshire CR Feb 1:1
 Nixon, President Richard
 Consumer justice Dec 15:2
 Energy address Dec 1:1
 President's program Nov 15:1
 Project Independence Feb 1:1
 Noise Nov 1:4
 Nonflammable Nov 1:4
 NOW accounts CR Feb 1:1
 Nursing homes CR Feb 1:2

Nutrition program for the elderly CR Oct 1:2
 Nylon CR Feb 15:1

O, P, Q

Octane ratings Feb 1:2
Office of Consumer Affairs
 Consumer Action Panels Dec 1:3
 CONSUMER NEWS Nov 1:1
 Energy tips Jan 1:1 Jan 15:1
 Feb 15:1 Mar 15:4
 Meat identification program Oct 15:4
 Toy safety Dec 1:4
 Off-road vehicles CR Dec 15:1
 Older Americans CR Nov 15:1, 2
 Oral contraceptives CR Nov 1:1
 Over-the-counter drugs Oct 15:3
 CR 1:2 CR Feb 1:1
 Overbooking Dec 15:3
 Oysters, clams & mussels CR Feb 1:2
 Pacemakers CR Oct 1:2
 Paints Oct 1:1 Jan 15:4 CR Nov 15:1 CR Jan 1:1
 Pesticides CR Feb 1
 Pet birds Mar 15:3
 Pet shops Feb 15:1
 Pierced ears Feb 15:4
 Poison Nov 1:2 Jan 15:4 CR Mar 15:1
Postal Service
 Experimental fuel Jan 1:1
 Holiday mailing Nov 15:3
 Parcel post Nov 15:3
 Stamps by mail Nov 15:3
 Powered boats Mar 15:3
 Prescription drugs Oct 15:3 CR Feb 1:1
 Price per half gallon Mar 15:2
 Product hazard list Oct 15:2
 Project Independence Feb 1:1
 Product safety
 Artists' paints CR Jan 1:1 CR Nov 15:1
 Back to school safety Oct 1:1
 Banned hazardous products CR Mar 15:2
Banned Product List Nov 1:1
 Battery charger Mar 1:4
 Carpets Mar 15:3
 Child car seats Mar 1:4
 Clothes Mar 15:3
 Clothes dryers Mar 15:3
 Color TV Jan 1:1 Feb 1:1
Consumer Guide to Toys Dec 1:4
 Cribs CR Jan 1:1 Feb 1:1
 Decorative fireplaces Jan 1:4
 Defective products CR Mar 15:2
 Fabric flammability CR Jan 15:1
 Federal Hazardous Substances Act CR Nov 15:2
 Fireplaces Feb 15:2
 Instant glue Jan 15:3
 Lamps Mar 1:4
 Lead carbonate CR Nov 15:1
 Lead paints CR Mar 1:2
 Lighters Jan 1:4
 Mattress flammability CR Jan 15:1
 Microwave ovens CR Oct 1:2
 Poison prevention packaging CR Mar 15:1
 Product Hazard Index Oct 15:2
 Regional offices Nov 1:1
 Store monitors Dec 1:4
 Storing gasoline Dec 1:4
 Toys Nov 1:1, 4 Dec 1:4 CR Nov 15:2 CR Feb 15:1
 Winter sports Feb 1:3
 Public comment CR Dec 1:2

Public Health Service Oct 15:3
 Feb 15:4
 Purple ink Feb 15:4
 Quality control CR Mar 15:1

R, S, T

Rail Services Planning Office Mar 1:1
 Recalls Oct 1:1
 Reflective strips Oct 1:1
 Rodent killer Feb 15:3
 Room heaters Jan 15:2
 Rusting Nov 1:4
 "Safe for Children" Oct 1:1
 Savings accounts CR Feb 1:1
 Safety Oct 1:1 Nov 1:1
 Sealed cans CR Feb 1:1
 Seat belts CR Mar 1:1
 Shavers CR Oct 1:2
 Shooting games Nov 1:4
 Siphoning Jan 15:4
 Skating Feb 1:3
 Skiing Feb 1:3
 "Skilled" nursing home CR Feb 1:2
 Sledding Feb 1:3
 Small claims courts Dec 15:2
 Solar energy Feb 15:4
 Snowmobiling Feb 1:3
Social Security Administration CR Nov 15:1, 2
 Social services CR Oct 1:2
 Speed Nov 15:1 Feb 15:4
 Spray adhesives CR Mar 15:1, 2
 Stamps by mail Nov 15:3
 Swine blood CR Feb 15:1
 Synthetic hormone CR Oct 15:1
 Tequila CR Jan 15:1 CR Mar 15:2
 Tie-in Jan 15:3
 Tipping Nov 1:3
 Thermo-insulated bottles Oct 1:1
 Thermostat Oct 15:1
 "Tire failure" CR Oct 15:2
 Tires CR Oct 15:2 CR Nov 1:1 CR Jan 1:2
 Tobogganing Feb 1:3
 Tomatoes CR Oct 1:1
 Toy cap pistols Nov 1:4
 Toy-related injury Nov 1:1 Dec 1:1
 Toys Nov 1:1, 4 Dec 1:4 CR Feb 15:1
 Toy safety coordinators Nov 1:1
 Trains Mar 1:1 Mar 15:2
Transportation Dept Feb 15:2 Mar 1:1 Mar 15:2 CR Oct 15:2
Treasury Dept CR Jan 15:1 CR Mar 15:2
 Trichinae CR Jan 1:1

U, V, W, X, Y
U.S. Coast Guard Jan 15:2 Mar 15:3
 Vaccinations & vaccines Oct 15:3
 Vaporizer Oct 15:3
 Vegetables Mar 15:2
 Viral infection Oct 15:3
 Vitamins Oct 15:3
 Vocational schools Oct 1:4
 Voluntary standardized meat name program Oct 15:4
 "Waiver of revocation rights" CR Oct 1:1
 Washing machines Oct 15:2
Washington Post Feb 1:2
 Water supply CR Oct 1:1
 Whey CR Oct 15:1
 Windshield mountings CR Feb 15:2
 Winter sports Feb 1:3
 Woods for fireplaces Feb 15:2
 X-ray machines CR Nov 1:2
 Yard goods Mar 15:2
 Yogurt CR Dec 1:1

Warning!

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued an emergency order banning distribution & sale of indoor pesticide aerosols containing vinyl chloride as a propellant. (For details & product names, see this issue of CONSUMER REGISTER.)

Finding operating costs for air conditioners

Want to know how much you will save in operating costs per year by buying a more efficient air conditioner? National Bureau of Standards (NBS) offers a formula for comparing efficient cooling units with high EERs against less efficient ones with low EERs. (See page 1.)

You need 3 figures: (1) cost of electricity per kilowatt hour in your community; (2) annual hours of air conditioning required for your climate; (3) watts per hour required by each air conditioner. Get the first 2 figures from your local utility company. Get the third from the model or the salesman.

Let's say you need an air conditioner in the 8,000 Btu class. You're considering two models. The more efficient one (with an EER of 8.9) needs 900 watts; the less efficient one (EER—6.2) needs 1,300 watts & costs \$40 less. Your utility says you'll need air conditioning for 800 hours a year & electricity costs 4¢ per kilowatt hour.

Use this NBS formula: Multiply cost of electricity times hours of cooling needed times watts required by air conditioner. Divide answer by 1,000 to get operating cost in dollars.

- Here's annual cost for running more efficient model: $\$.04 \times 800 \times 900 = 28,800$ or \$28.80.
- Here's annual cost for running less efficient model: $\$.04 \times 800 \times 1,300 = 41,600$ or \$41.60.

Since you save \$12.80 per year in operating costs on the more efficient model, within about 3 years you will save the \$40 difference in purchase price. What's more, the higher-priced model may also offer special features—more fan speeds & better insulation, which means less noise. Also consider where you live. In a Florida city like Jacksonville (where you use 1,600 hours of air conditioning per year) you save more with a high-ERR model than in a cooler city like Chicago (only about 400 hours of cooling needed).

When you consider operating costs, remember that you're dealing with variables: How good is your insulation? What's the layout of your home? Do you leave doors open & allow cool air to escape? These all affect operating costs. The NBS formula cannot guarantee precisely what you will save in dollars & cents. But it does allow you to figure the difference in operating costs for 2 units under the same conditions.

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